

5.10 Terrorism Hazard

A major terrorism hazard event has been determined to have a **Low** likelihood of occurrence in Benton County within the five-year planning cycle of this Plan. Therefore, although some hazard characterization information is presented below, no further risk assessment has been performed for this hazard. Additional analyses to further characterize the risks of this hazard and the development of suitable mitigation action items will be conducted in the future based on periodic reviews of this hazard mitigation plan and available resources

5.10.1 Nature of the Hazard

Terrorism is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations as "*the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.*"

Historical Events

Terrorist incidents in this country prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks have included bombings of the World Trade Center (1993) in New York City, the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., and Mobil Oil corporate headquarters in New York City. There was also the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

In the U.S., most terrorist incidents have involved small extremist groups using terrorism to further a designated objective or obtain publicity for a cause. Bombings have been the most frequent method of attack in the U.S. Other possibilities include attacks against transportation facilities, utilities, or other public services, or an incident involving chemical or biological materials.

Characteristics of the Hazard

The primary objectives of most terrorist groups are to:

- Gain publicity
- Stimulate loss of confidence in the government
- Attract recruits
- Get public support
- Gain support from financial institutions, and ultimately
- Weaken and overthrow the government

Techniques used to gain an audience for their platform include: hostage-taking, product-tampering, criminal extortion, arson, sabotage, threats against individual family members, assassinations, kidnapping, explosive bombings, and armed attacks. The most likely targets of these forms of terrorism are political leaders, key military personnel, foreign missions, military facilities, corporate executives and facilities, and celebrities. Unfortunately, the risk of terrorist acts exists in the State of Washington, and cannot be ruled out for Benton County.

Terrorist attacks can take a wide variety of forms, ranging from a verbal threat to sabotage to biological weapons to a bomb. Prior to the airplane attacks on September 11, 2001, bombings

were the most frequently used terrorist method in the U.S. Types of terrorist attacks include, but are not limited to:

Bombs, Guns, and Explosives – These are the “traditional” weapons used by terrorists worldwide. Typically, these weapons are less technically and resource demanding.

Biological Weapons – These weapons use infectious microbes or toxins to produce illness or death in people, animals, or plants. Potential biological weapons include: anthrax, botulism, smallpox, viral hemorrhagic fevers, water safety threats (e.g. cholera), and food safety threats (e.g. salmonella). Biological weapons are relatively difficult to cultivate and disseminate.

Chemical Weapons – Chemical weapons cause severe health reactions designed to incapacitate or cause death. There is a wide array of potential chemical agents that could be used as weapons. These agents vary in how their effects on the body, required dose, exposure mechanism, length of exposure, toxicity, origination, and form (e.g. liquid, gas). Examples of chemical agents include sarin, mustard agent, VX and cyanide. Stockpiles of many of these agents are held at the Umatilla Chemical Depot, pending destruction (see Section 5.14).

Radiological and Nuclear Weapons – Although there has been much speculation by media and various governmental agencies regarding the potential for a terrorist to obtain fissionable material or a nuclear bomb, there are no known unclassified cases of any such organization or group actually obtaining weapons grade material. Constructing a nuclear bomb would be relatively difficult and require special resources, training, and materials.

Cyberterrorism – Cyberterrorism attacks computers and networks, and the information contained within them. A cyber attack could potentially disrupt communications, banking systems, power systems, and emergency networks.

Terrorist attacks typically occur without prior warning. There may, in some cases, be a heightened sense of hazard or alert, but there is rarely sufficient information available prior to an incident to allow for predicting the specific nature and time of an attack.

The effects of terrorism can vary significantly from property damage and disruption of services (power, water, transportation, and communication), to injury and/or loss of life. An incident could directly impact a relatively small area (e.g. a single building) or a large area (multiple buildings or disrupted services throughout a city). Even a small terrorist incident could have multiple impacts spreading throughout a community, such as disruption of services, interruptions to businesses, banking, and communications systems, false alarms, and long term trauma to responders, witnesses, caregivers, and others.

Terrorism is often categorized as "domestic" or "international." This distinction refers not to where the terrorist act takes place but rather to the origin of the individuals or groups responsible for it. For example, the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was an act of domestic terrorism, but the attacks of September 2001 were international in nature. For the purposes of consequence management, the origin of the perpetrator(s) is of less importance than the impacts of the attack on life and property; thus, the distinction between domestic and international terrorism is less relevant for the purposes of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery than understanding the capabilities of terrorist groups and how to respond to the impacts they can generate.

Terrorists look for visible targets where they can avoid detection before or after an attack such as international airports, large cities, major international events, resorts, and high-profile landmarks.

5.10.2 Hazard Assessment

To be determined.

Hazard Identification

To be determined.

Vulnerability Assessment

To be determined.

Risk Analysis

To be determined.

5.10.3 Community Concerns

Current Conditions

To be determined.

Ongoing Mitigation

The federal government has developed a terrorist hazard risk alert system, the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). The HSAS describes the perceived risk level of a terrorist attack in the U.S. (or on U.S. holdings and facilities worldwide) based on intelligence reports and the state of political relationships around the world. Government agencies design their preventive actions based on the reported level of risk. The American Red Cross has developed a similar system for citizens to use.

When terrorism strikes, communities may receive assistance from State and Federal agencies operating within the existing Integrated Emergency Management System. FEMA is the lead Federal agency for supporting State and local response to the consequences of terrorist attacks.

FEMA's role in managing terrorism includes both antiterrorism and counterterrorism activities. Antiterrorism refers to defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of people and property to terrorist acts, while counterterrorism includes offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. Within the emergency management arena, antiterrorism is a hazard mitigation activity and counterterrorism falls within the scope of preparedness, response and recovery.

In January 2000, the Washington State Emergency Management Council formed the Committee on Terrorism. The Committee develops and recommends to the Council statewide strategies to address threats and acts of terrorism through mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Since its formation, the Committee has provided oversight for the following:

- A statewide assessment of local first responder needs and capabilities and the distribution of \$3 million in federal grants for police and fire agencies.
- Amendment of the Public Disclosure Act to prevent the release of certain public records containing information intended to prevent or mitigate acts of terrorism.
- Coordination of more than 20 local and regional first responder training exercises and 50 anti-terrorism training classes.
- Completion of a statewide threat assessment and analysis and the terrorism annex to the state's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

5.10.4 Mitigation Strategies

To be determined.

5.10.5 Resources

State Resources

To be determined.

Federal Resources

To be determined.

Other Resources

To be determined.